



NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society

Volume 4 Number 2

James W. Mertins, Editor

May, 1976

EDITOR'S NOTES

This is the second time I've written these notes for this issue of the NEWSLETTER. The first time was in mid-April, and I raved on about the beautiful, early, and warm spring weather; how winter had been vanquished in one fell-swoop, and so on. The past month has forced me to a rewrite, because of frequent early morning frosts, winds, and generally miserable weather. Despite this setback, however, where the season started out about three weeks ahead of normal, I understand that it is still ten days ahead of 1974 and 1975, and spring farming chores are well along. If the recent unusual weather didn't catch too many early emerging insects unaware, the passing of the fourth successive relatively mild winter for Wisconsin seems to bode well for insect populations amongst other living inhabitants of our State.

And, of course, spring warms the entomologist's blood too. Many of us are already out in the woods and fields seeking new entomological specimens and experiences. This year, in addition to the usual independent activities of each member and the organized WES events, Wisconsin entomologists have an opportunity to join with lepidopterists from all over the U.S. at the annual meeting of the Lepidopterist's Society co-sponsored by WES and the UW-Entomology Department, and held here in Madison from June 24-27. In addition, the Xerces Society (for preservation of endangered species of Lepidoptera) will meet in Madison on the 28th, and in Milwaukee on the 29th of June. We hope that as many members as possible will make an effort to attend and participate in these events. We also hope that with the long collecting season and variety of activities in the offing, that many members will have experiences, notes, and reports to relate to the rest of the Society through the NEWSLETTER.

NOTICES

For sale. 11 glass top U.S.N.M.-type insect pinning drawers. These are old, but in good condition and will accommodate insects. A cabinet could easily be built to accommodate the set. \$5 each or best offer. Contact Eric Erickson, 21 Burning Wood St., Madison, WI (tel. 249-3404).

Wanted. 1975 Lepidoptera field summary from all North Central states and adjacent Ontario (including Wisconsin) for Annual Summary of "Lepidopterist's" Society. Send data (new records, range extensions, changes in populations, etc.) to M.C. Nielson, 3415 Overlea Dr., Lansing, MI 48917.

Wanted. Uropodid mites associated with ant and termite nests in North America. Please contact William Phillipsen, Dept. of Entomology, UW, Madison 53706.

The NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society is published two to four times yearly at irregular intervals. Please send all news, notes, contributions and other items for the NEWSLETTER to the Editor, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

NOTICES (cont.)

Wanted. Records for all Wisconsin Aegeriidae (clear-winged moths) with information on county, host-plant, etc. if possible. Will accept any specimens you don't want, or have some lesser peach tree borers (male and female), Synanthedon pictipes, for trade. Clyde S. Gorsuch, Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wis., Madison, WI 53706.

For sale. Very large selection of foreign exotic insects, especially butterflies, moths, and beetles. Many large showy species. I have taken over the business of the late Mr. George Schirmer and will welcome any inquiries or correspondence. I will also consider trades for certain species. Please contact Dan Capps, 231 Powers Ave., Madison, WI 53714 (tel. 249-7271 evenings).

Wanted to trade. Native of exotic foreign beetles; have numerous perfect mounted Catocala moths (mostly duplicates) for exchange. John Hempel, 1516 Sherman, Janesville, Wis. 53545.

Wanted. Cockroaches, any species, but especially non-domestic ones; live or preserved in alcohol. If possible, location and habitat data on specimens would be greatly appreciated. Ralph Howard, Wood Products Insect Lab., P.O. Box 2008, Evergreen Station, Gulfport, Miss. 39501.

Wanted. Records by county for all Wisconsin Rhopalocera, Sphingidae, Saturniidae, and Catocala. For more details write Roger Kuehn, 5042 N. 61 St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53218.

Wanted. Confirmable reports or specimens from termite infestations within Wisconsin. Please contact Glenn Esenther, U.S. Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, with any information you may have.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

(Please submit items of interest about yourself or other members for this column.)

Robert Topczewski, member of MES, WES, and Councilman for the latter group, is currently convalescing at home after spending two weeks in the hospital for treatment of a heart ailment he suffered last April 4. Our best wishes to Bob for a swift and complete recovery.

In early April, 1976, Walter Scott was the recipient of another award, this time "Outstanding Environmentalist" from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Congratulations!

Former WES President, Ralph Howard, now resident in Mississippi, recently reported that he is very busy at the Southern Forest Experiment Station in Gulfport with his termite studies. These include investigating the possibility of utilizing hydrocarbon analysis for termite species identification, labeling and biosynthesis studies of the trailfollowing substance, bait studies, and some interesting work with termitophiles.

NEWS OF MEMBERS (cont.)

Congratulations are also due to Clyde Gorsuch, who passed his preliminary qualifying exam May 6 on the way to a Ph.D. in Entomology at UW-Madison.

Dan Martin, a sophomore at Madison Memorial High School, is spending some time this semester in the U.W. Entomology Department as a part of a program to acquaint students with careers which might interest them. Dan chose to find out about opportunities in entomology, and what entomologists do.

Prof. John Medler is departing for London as we go to press, where he will spend a month gathering additional information for his list of the insects of Nigeria.

New Members

G. Mallory Boush Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
Eleanor H. Brenneke Box 216, Hortonville, WI 54944
Eric Erickson Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
Michael Karandinos Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
Tom Karl Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
Paul Kotila Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
Steve Krauth Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin
John T. Medler Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Wisconsin

Changes of Address

Barb Campana 10838 113 St., Edmonton, Alberta Canada TSH 3J2
Joan H. Masters P.O. Box 66872, Scott's Valley, CA 95066
Richard P. Narf 1114 Moorland Rd. #107, Madison, WI 53713
James C. Parkinson P.O. Box 331, Florence TX 76527
Kenneth A. Schmitt, Jr. 2457 N. 64 St., Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Member Résumés

Prof. G. Mallory Boush is a new member of WES, and also recently became Acting-Chairman of the Department of Entomology at UW-Madison. Dr. Boush indicates an interest in life history, biology, and behavioral studies of insects, along with the effects of pesticides in the environment.

Assist. Prof. Michael Karandinos has been teaching the insect ecology courses in the UW Entomology Department since his arrival in 1970. Dr. Karandinos is very interested in biological and quantitative population studies of insects, and has been conducting research on sessiid moth borers, particularly the lesser peach tree borer.

NEWS OF MEMBERS (cont.)

Assist. Prof. Eric Erickson is a staff member of the USDA North Central States Bee Research Laboratory located in Russell Labs, in addition to his joint appointment in the Entomology Department. While he of course knows a lot about pollination and bee behavior, Dr. Erickson also has a keen interest in biological and ecological studies of meloid beetle parasitoids of bees, an interest which began in Tucson at the University of Arizona 3 years before his arrival in Madison in 1970.

Tom Karl is a second year graduate student in entomology at UW-Madison, and is also serving as a teaching assistant in the Department. An avid general collector and naturalist, Tom is particularly interested in insects, and in folklore and superstitions about them and their relations to humans. His research interest is the caddisflies of Parfrey's Glen.

Paul Kotila is also a second year graduate student in entomology at Madison. Paul has a MS from Michigan Tech, and is currently working on the effect of antimycin (a fish poison) on stream insects. He is willing to aide members with identifications of aquatic insects.

Steve Krauth is what one might call an adopted entomologist. Trained in ornithology, with a MS degree in biology, Steve began work under Prof. Shenefelt in 1974 on the gypsy moth parasitoid recovery project. He has learned an awful lot of entomology since then, and has become a first class preparator of specimens. He has taken a special personal interest in curculionids in addition to his birds.

Prof. John T. Medler returned to Madison last fall after 7 years in Ile-Ife, Nigeria at the University of Ife. Dr. Medler served as Chief of Party for the University of Wisconsin USAID program there while on leave from UW, and in addition to his administrative and teaching duties, found time to conduct a survey of the insects of Nigeria. This is currently being prepared for publication in at least 5 volumes. Recently Dr. Medler generously became the first sustaining member of WES. His major interests are in taxonomy and biology, and his specialty is Hemiptera, a group for which he will provide identifications to members, as time permits. Welcome back Professor Medler!

HISTORY OF WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY - IX

Because of the strength of the apiculture program at Wisconsin under Wilson and Farrar, the Miller Memorial Library was established on campus. Dr. Miller was a graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, but because of illness was unable to practice. Instead he devoted his full interests to beekeeping, becoming a world authority and prolific writer on the subject. At the time of his death in 1920, he had collected 4-500 volumes of literature and many pamphlets on apiculture, and many of his friends conceived the idea of creating a memorial library of apicultural literature to his honor. Custody of the library was to go to a university or college which actively supported apiculture, and Prof. Wilson convinced the group that Wisconsin was the right place.

Following its establishment, donations of over 5000 serial volumes of bee journals, books, and pamphlets were received for the library, and an endowment fund was set up to use for expansion of bee journal subscriptions. The Miller Memorial Library, now housed in Steenbock Memorial Library on the UW agricultural campus, is known as the most extensive collection of bee literature in the world.

HISTORY OF WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY - IX (cont.)

Research by Wilson and his graduate students was extensive, and included projects on queen bee breeding, honey-production potentialities, wintering problems and their causes, spread and control of American foulbrood, pollination problems, and disinfection of beekeeping equipment. In 1927, Research Bulletin 75 was written by H. F. Wilson and V. G. Milum on "Winter protection for the honey bee colony". Whitcomb and Wilson dealt with the mechanics of bee digestion and dysentary problems in bees in Bulletin 92 (1929). Other research involved honey storage, spoilage problems, bee nutrition, and artificial insemination of queen bees, first reported by H. H. Laidlaw in 1939, and later elaborated by C. L. Farrar and his qualified staff.

Biology and control studies by graduate students during Wilson's administration included work on pests of corn and peas, resulting in some of the earliest research on the persistence of DDT and its occurrence in dairy cattle and milk.

The physical facilities of the Entomology Department during Wilson's time as Chairman were very limited. The department was centered in the old Dean Humphrey residence on the lower agricultural campus with several classrooms and offices in the in the Horticulture Building, later renamed King Hall.

Prof. Wilson retired from the University on July 1, 1948, after 32 years of service to the State. He was noted for his ability to stimulate student interest in agricultural activities. He appreciated youthful abilities and efforts, and maintained a favorable relationship with the faculty as well. Wilson was responsible for initiating the Hexapod, a departmental publication for disseminating information on the activities of entomology staff and associates to alumni and other interested parties. Until his death on Feb. 8, 1959, Prof. Wilson lived in California with his wife and two sons, and participated in a slide rule manufacturing business with a former Wisconsin entomology student, R.C. Pickett.

WISCONSIN INSECT NOTES

The Wisconsin Cooperative Pest Survey Bulletin suggests that in the wake of the recent late winter ice storm which plagued much of the State, trees with damaged crowns should be properly pruned and wounds sealed with tree paint. This will help prevent infection by heart rots and some wilt causing fungi. Destruction of refuse and broken limbs will aid in suppression of potential insect problems which might otherwise develop in the dead wood.

The Madison City Council spent 90 minutes of their February 24, 1976 meeting in debate over a proposed ordinance to outlaw beekeeping (and swinekeeping) within the city limits. The ordinance was eventually defeated.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

A follow-up on the Legion of night: The underwing moths by Theodore Sargent mentioned in the last NEWSLETTER. My copy finally came in and it was worth the wait. The color plates are surprisingly and effectively presented against a black background. The interesting and highly readable text is interspersed with attractive drawings, and handsome black and white photos, charts, and tables.

Another blockbuster of a book came out in early April, 1976, Insects that feed on trees and shrubs: An illustrated practical guide by Warren T. Johnson and Howard H. Lyon., Cornell Univ. Press. \$35.00. This comprehensive handbook is considerably bigger than the hand (23 x 31 cm). It features 212 full-color, composite, full-page plates, and provides essential information about more than 650 species of insects occurring on woody ornamental plants in North America; it is fully indexed.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST (cont.)

For those of you interested in aquatic insects, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has published Technical Bulletin No. 89, Aquatic insects of Wisconsin (1975) by WES Treasurer, Prof. William L. Hilsenhoff. The 52-page document treats the aquatic stages only of aquatic insect genera likely to occur in Wisconsin, and provides a glossary, generic keys, and notes on biology, ecology, and distribution.

Along the same lines, two other recent publications involve "aquatic" insects in Wisconsin: "Curculionidae and Chrysomelidae found in aquatic habitats in Wisconsin" by Lutz J. Bayer and H. Jane Brockman in the Great Lakes Entomologist 8(4): 219-226 (1975); and "Heptageniidae (Ephemeroptera) of Wisconsin" by R. Wills Flowers and William L. Hilsenhoff Ibid 8(4): 201-218 (1975).

For those members who may be interested in Insect World Digest, a worthwhile bi-monthly periodical previously mentioned on these pages, I see that publication of the Digest was recently taken over by Data Courier, Inc., 620 S.5th St., Louisville, KY 40202. The subscription rate is \$10.00 per year.

In a fit of nostalgia, the editor ran across an old boyhood favorite of his the other day in the library. Probably more than any other book, the Butterfly and moth book by Ellen Robertson-Miller was responsible for encouraging my early interest in entomology, and especially in rearing caterpillars. Published in 1912 by Charles Scribner's Sons., the book is hardly new, but its rather quaint (if not technically perfect) photos, and personal observations and style were just the thing to set a young boy's heart thumping and feet pounding the woods and fields seeking caterpillars to carry home and raise like beloved pets.

MISCELLANEOUS

Tarantula Patrol

(Postponed from last issue due to lack of space. Perhaps by now most members have seen or heard some of the widespread press coverage of this story, but for those who haven't, read on.)

What's less than four inches long, hairy, and more effective than a watch dog in frightening off would-be burglars? A tarantula, says the owner of The Sterling Works, a San Francisco jewelry store which has been renting a pair of the giant spiders since last March.

Taking turns for one another at two month intervals, "Rosie" and "Henrietta" stand guard in the store's display case with a sign which warns: "This area is patrolled by tarantulas." The Sterling Works' display window was plagued by a major break-in plus a number of subsequent attempts before the owners went looking for a guard dog from a canine protection service last winter.

They came back with a tarantula, at the recommendation of the service's operator who personally cares for the spiders that are rented for a fee of \$10 each month. As far as Sterling Works is concerned, Rosie and Henrietta are "great"; it has no burglaries since the spiders moved in.

Of course, there is one drawback. A tarantula's appearance is a lot worse than its bite. Recent research shows that the creature's venom carries less of a threat than most people think. As one expert says, "Regardless of old Hollywood horror films, a tarantula bite is hardly worse than a bee or wasp sting, unless you happen to have a particular allergy. As a matter of fact, some ants, bees, and wasps are far more dangerous, but it's the spiders that always make the headlines."

MISCELLANEOUS (cont.)

Ironically, that may be the downfall of the Sterling Works' effective tarantula patrol. The store has received all kinds of press coverage, the owners report, "But wouldn't you know it, only the local papers mentioned that they're harmless."

The tarantula owes its fearsome reputation to its size. The giants of the spider kingdom, some South American tarantulas' bodies grow to a length of nearly four inches. Species found in the southwest United States can reach two inches, and have legs spanning nearly two inches. Fuzzy, fur-covered legs serve a vital purpose. Hampered by poor eyesight, the tarantula tastes, smells, and detects movement with the delicate hairs that cover its legs and body.

New World tarantulas - unrelated to their European counterparts - retain features of the most primitive spiders: four lungs, jaws that move vertically instead of horizontally, and minimal use of silk.

A tarantula cannot spin a web, and depends on its formidable bite to kill small insects for a meal. The big spiders dine on insects but sometimes take on frogs and small birds. As naturalists' pets, they may enjoy tidbits of chopped beefsteak. Some have been known to consume a mouse at one long, leisurely sitting.

When attacking, a tarantula rears up on its six hind legs. The front pair of legs and the fangs swing upward. Then the creature lunges forward and down, spearing a victim with its fangs. Venom is injected into the prey, and the tarantula stands quietly aside until the poison takes effect.

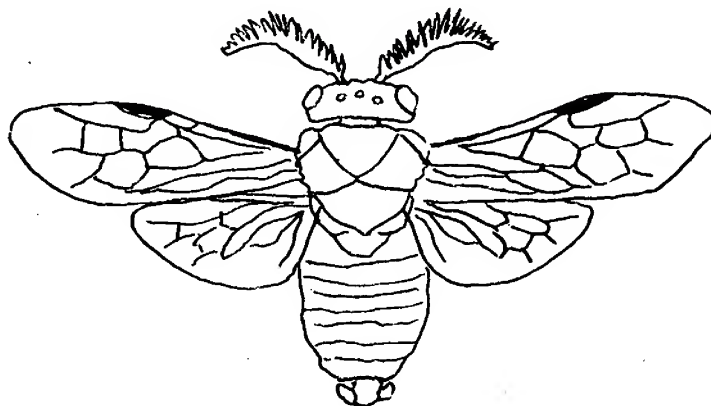
Unable to chew, spiders first soften their food. They crush it, coat it with a tenderizing enzyme, then suck it in.

Unless done in by one of its mortal enemies, such as the topaz-winged pompiliid wasp, a tarantula can live to a ripe old age. The average life of most spiders is one year. Tarantulas may take eight to ten years to mature and live as long as 30 years.

-From NWF Conservation News 41(1): 11-12. (1975).

DUES

Seven members have still not paid their dues for 1975 or 1976. This is the last notice before their names are dropped from our rolls.



WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Print:

Last Name First Name
Address: _____
Street City State Zip
Organization represented (if any) _____
Title or Occupation _____ Phone: (include area code) _____

Individual membership (\$2.00 per year)

Organization membership (\$10.00 per year)

Sustaining membership (\$25.00 or more per year)

General Interest Area

Aquatic Insects _____ Collecting and/or Taxonomy

4-H or Scout Member _____ Insect Photography

Extension Worker _____ Physiology

Life History, Biology, & Behavior _____ Apiculture

Other _____ Specify _____ Pest Control

Specific Interests (Order, Family, Genus) _____

If you are an authority for certain insect taxa, would you be willing to identify Wisconsin specimens for members? Yes _____ No _____

Make checks payable to Wisconsin Entomological Society and mail to the Treasurer, William Hilsenhoff, Dept. of Entomology, 237 Russell Labs., U. Wisc., Madison, Wisc. 53706 .

Wisconsin Entomological Society
Department of Entomology
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wis. 53706

Address correction requested